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CVAMC: VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH (VJO) PROGRAM

Veterans Justice Outreach-The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has committed to preventing incarceration and reducing recidivism among Veterans through the development of the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program. The Veterans Justice Outreach program works with justice-involved Veterans. A justice-involved Veteran is any Veteran who has contact with the judicial system, law enforcement or the jail system.

VJO Initiative-“The purpose of the VJO initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance services.” *Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, April 30, 2009. Under Secretary for Health’s Information Letter.*

The Veteran Justice Outreach Program has three focus areas:

1. **Courts and Attorneys-**Provide information and education about Veterans’ issues to include PTSD and TBI and services available. Develop and implement Veterans’ Courts.
2. **Law Enforcement-**Provide training to local law enforcement on Veterans’ issues and strategies to help work with Veterans.
3. **Jails-** Develop communication with jails to identify Veterans who are incarcerated and engage Veterans in available services upon their release.

What a VJO Coordinator Can Do:

- Serve Veterans of all eras
- Assess Veteran’s health care needs, identify appropriate VA and non-VA services
- Refer and link Veteran to comprehensive health care services
- With Veteran consent, communicate essentials (attendance, progress, treatment testing, discharge plan)
- Function as a court team member
- Provide Evidence Based Treatment for court-monitored Veterans

What a VJO Coordinator Can’t Do:

- Perform forensic psychiatric/psychological evaluations for the court
- Accept custody
- Guarantee program acceptance
- Write lengthy court report, complete Diversion paperwork
- Advocate for legislation
- Serve VHA ineligible Veterans
- Decide criminal justice criteria for Veteran Court participation or decide who gains admission to specialty treatment court

How do I get started?

1. **VA 101 -**The first step to providing VA healthcare services to Veterans is to identify them as Veterans. Ask: “Have you ever served in the United States Armed Forces or military?” Do not ask: “Are you a Veteran?” since many Veterans think this applies only to Veterans

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who served in combat. Building this question into the booking or arraignment process as soon as possible will facilitate eligibility determination for Veterans.

2. The second step is to determine whether a Veteran is eligible and can enroll for VA services. VA eligibility/admissions offices at the local VA determine eligibility; VA clinical staff cannot provide determinative information on eligibility.

What services are available? Available health care services may include:

- Hospital and outpatient medical care
- Domiciliary and nursing home
- Military Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women veterans
- Homeless programs
- Readjustment counseling
- Mental health services, including: alcohol and drug treatment, work therapy, anger management, and PTSD treatment.

In order for VHA clinicians to communicate with the justice system, the Veteran must sign a *Release of Information*.

For more on services, consult Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors *2010 Edition*, available online at: http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits_book.asp.

Who should I contact?

- **For urgent health needs:** 24 hour telephone care, call (888) 558-3812
- **Our Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists:**
 1. **Diana Zinnie, LCSW**
(610) 384-7711, ext. 5625; Diana.Zinnie@va.gov
 2. **Rhonda Sanford, LCSW**
(610) 384-7711 ; Rhonda.Sanford@va.gov

When will I be seen? Generally, VHA outpatient services will see eligible Veterans within 30 days of referral.

For more information, visit:

- VA Coatesville homepage: www.coatsville.va.gov
- VJO Initiative website: <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>

* Source: VJO program information verified via Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists, Diana Zinnie, LCSW and Rhonda Sanford, LCSW; 12/2012

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COMMUNITY LEGAL/ADVOCACY RESOURCES

AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania

1211 Chestnut St., Suite 600

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-587-9377

<http://www.aidslawpa.org>

** Only agency in Pennsylvania to provide legal services and referrals without charge to people with HIV/AIDS.*

American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania

P. O. Box 40008

Philadelphia, PA 19106

215-592-1513

www.aclupa.org

** Works to prevent and resolve civil rights violations*

Catholic Social Services

227 N. 18th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-854-7000/7019

<http://catholicsocialservicesphilly.org/>

** Non-resident service: representation proceedings, via processing, handling appeals of legalization cases.*

Chester County Bar Association

15 West Gay Street, 2nd floor

West Chester, PA 19380

610-692-1889

Lawyer Referral Service Hotline: 610-429-1500

<http://chescobar.org/>

Hours: Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Closed all legal holidays.

Access to Justice Program

15 West Gay Street, 2nd floor

West Chester, PA 19380

http://www.chescobar.org/public/access_to_justice.html

Services: Many hard working Chester County residents earn too much to qualify for a free legal aid lawyer, yet cannot afford the high cost of hiring a private attorney. The members of the Chester County Bar Association recognize this challenge and offer a solution with the Access to Justice Program. The Chester County Bar Association is the only bar association in the state with this unique, award winning program. This program fills the gap between pro bono and hiring an attorney at full cost. Cases accepted include: Simple Wills; Power of Attorney; Living Wills; Bankruptcy; Landlord-Tenant; Elder Law; Custody and Visitation; No Asset Divorce; Small Estates; Miscellaneous cases at the discretion of the program.

Access to Justice Program: To find out if you qualify, call the Legal Aid Intake Unit at 1-877-429-5994

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Hours: Monday through Friday 9 am to 1 pm. Intake workers will walk you through the qualifying process to see if you meet the income requirements.

Community Legal Services

** Provides free legal help for low-income residents of Philadelphia*

1424 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

<http://www.clsphila.org/>

215-981-3700

This is also the Family Advocacy Line for parents whose children are involved with DHS

Community Legal Services, North Philadelphia Law Center

1410 West Erie Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19140

215-227-2400

Hours: Monday through Friday 9am to 5 pm

-Welfare Law Line: 215-227-6485

Helps with welfare, medical assistance, childcare or other welfare programs.

-Child Support Defendant Hotline (Philadelphia Legal Assistance): 215-981-3800

Information for people being ordered to pay child support.

Community Satisfaction Team (CST)

520 N. Delaware Ave., 7th floor

Philadelphia, PA 19123

215-923-9627

<http://thecst.com/>

** Family members, child and adult consumers of mental health and D and A services, assist consumers to increase their satisfaction with behavioral health programs.*

Defender Association of Philadelphia

1441 Samson Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-568-3190

<http://www.philadefender.org/>

** Representation of Criminal cases*

Disability Advocacy Program

PA Department of Public Welfare

5853 Germantown Ave.

Philadelphia, PA 19144

215-726-4600

<http://www.pcacares.org/>

**Assists those 65 and under in receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).*

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Disability Rights Network of PA

<https://www.drnpa.org/>

**DRN is a statewide, non-profit corporation designated as the federally-mandated organization to advance and protect the civil rights of adults and children with disabilities. DRN works with people with disabilities and their families to ensure their rights to live in their communities with the services they need, to receive a full and inclusive education, to live free of discrimination, abuse and neglect, and to have control and self-determination over their services.*

Harrisburg Office (email: drnpa-hbg@drnpa.org)

1414 N. Cameron St., 2nd floor

Harrisburg, PA 17103

1-800-692-7443 [Voice]; (717) 236-8110 [Voice]

1-877-375-7139 [TDD] ; (717) 346-0293 [TDD]

Philadelphia Office (email: drnpa-phila@drnpa.org)

The Philadelphia Building

1315 Walnut St., Suite 500

Philadelphia, PA 19107-4798

(215) 238-8070

Pittsburgh Office (email: drnpa-pgh@drnpa.org)

429 Fourth Avenue, Suite 701

Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1505

(412) 391-5225

Education Law Center

The Philadelphia Building

1315 Walnut Street, 4th floor

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-238-6970

<http://www.elc-pa.org>

**A non-profit legal advocacy and educational organization dedicated to ensuring that all Pennsylvania's children have access to a quality public education.*

Good Shepherd Mediation Program

5356 Chew Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19138

215-843-5413

<http://www.phillymediators.org/>

** Works to resolve disputes among two or more parties with the aid of a mediator to empower persons to resolve disputes without litigation.*

Homeless Advocacy Project

42 South 15th St., 4th floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-523-9595, or toll free 1-800-837-2672

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<http://homelessadvocacyproject.org/>

**exists to meet the legal and advocacy needs of homeless individuals and families in Philadelphia.*

Housing Association of Delaware Valley

1528 Walnut Street 10th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-545-6010

http://www.artistsresourceguide.org/Housing_association_of_delaware_valley_hadv

**The primary purpose of the Housing Association of Delaware Valley is to secure decent housing for all people and the elimination of racism and discrimination in housing.*

Juvenile Law Center

1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-625-0551

www.jlc.org

**Public interest law center which provides legal services to children; Specializing in reform of the child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health systems and children's health.*

Lawyer Referral and Information Service

1101 Market Street, 10th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-238-6333

Military Assistance Program: 215-238-6388

www.philadelphiaabar.org

**Not a free service, but do provide information on other free legal services in the Philadelphia area.*

Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania

625 Swede Street

Norristown, PA 19401

610-275-5400

Toll-free Helpline at 1-877-429-5994.

Helpline hours are Monday through Friday, 9 am to 1 pm.

www.lasp.org

**LASP offers community legal education, staff in-service training and outreach about our services to a variety of groups in our four-county region (Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery). Topics include: Family law; public benefits; housing law; elder law; consumer law*

Legal Clinic for the Disabled (LCD)

1513 Race Street

Philadelphia PA 19102

215-587-3166

www.lcdphila.org

**Provides free high quality legal services to low-income people with physical disabilities in Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania. LCD helps people solve a wide range of legal problems.*

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Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania **Division of Adult Advocacy Services**

1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1100

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-751-1800 x 231

Information and referral: 215-751-1800 X 228; 800-688-4226

www.mhasp.org/adultservices

**Creates opportunities for individuals and family members to effectively respond to the challenges of mental health conditions through our work in five domains: advocacy, direct support to individuals, training and education, information and referral, and technical assistance.*

Pennsylvania Bar Association Military Personnel Pro Bono Referral Program

100 South Street

Harrisburg, PA 17108

800-932-0311 ext. 2236

www.palawhelp.org

**Pennsylvania Bar Association has a statewide referral service in place. Assistance is provided to reservists and families in SSCRA, USERRA, and SGLI. Cases in the system are reviewed by JAGC lawyer. Free CLE training materials are available to volunteers.*

PA Health Law Project

**PHLP provides free legal services and advocacy to Pennsylvanians having trouble accessing publicly funded health care coverage or services.*

Toll Free HelpLine: 800-274-3258; 866-236-6310 TTY; or e-mail: staff@phlp.org

-www.phlp.org

Philadelphia Offices:

Corn Exchange Building

Suite 400

123 Chestnut St.

Philadelphia, PA 19106

Phone: (215) 625-3990

Pittsburgh Offices:

The Hollander Building

415 East Ohio Street

Suite 325

Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Phone:(412) 434 5779

Harrisburg Offices:

P.O Box 702

Camp Hill, PA 17001-0702

Phone: (717) 236-6310

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PA Utility Law Project

118 Locust Street

Harrisburg, PA 17101

717- 236-9486 ext 202

Toll Free:

(800) 322-7572 ext 202

<http://rhls.org/pa-utility-law-project/>

**What We Do: Our mission at PULP is to assist Pennsylvania's low-income residential utility and energy consumers connect to and maintain affordable utility and energy services within their homes. We help both groups and individuals who meet the income eligibility guidelines of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network. PULP Serves All of Pennsylvania..*

We specialize in:

- Assistance and information regarding utility termination and payment arrangements
- Utility customer service obligations
- Universal Service Programs
- Landlord-Tenant related utility issues
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Issues

Philadelphia Bar Association

Lawyer Referral and Information Service

1101 Market Street, 10th Floor

Philadelphia PA 19107

215-238-6333

LRIS can be contacted by phone Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Reduced fee legal services, referrals to low or reduced fee legal services in Philadelphia..*

Philadelphia Bar Association Military Assistance Program

215-238-6388

<http://www.philabar.org/page/MAP?appNum=1>

**The Military Assistance Program (MAP) is designed to help those in our community who have placed their lives on the line for our freedom.*

Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program:

About the Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program:

- CAP is an advocacy program for people with disabilities administered by the Center for Disability Law and Policy.
- CAP helps people who are seeking services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Blindness and Visual Services, Centers for Independent Living and other programs funded under federal law.
- CAP help is provided to you at no charge, regardless of income.
- The Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program is dedicated to ensuring that the rehabilitation system in Pennsylvania is open and responsive to your needs.

CAP - Client Assistance Program Staff:

- Stephen S. Pennington, Esq., Executive Director
- Jamie C. Ray-Leonetti, Esq. Co-Director

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- Margaret Passio-McKenna, Esq., Senior CAP Advocate
- Lee Lippi, Senior CAP Advocate Harrisburg Office

Both Steve and Lee are Vietnam Veterans. Steve was in the Navy, and Lee spent one year in country with the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

The Client Assistance Program provides:

- Information and advice about rehabilitation programs.
- Advise on legal rights and responsibilities.
- Assistance in resolution of problems that may arise while seeking services from rehabilitation programs.
- Services to help pursue administrative and legal remedies to protect your rights.

Contact Information:

Philadelphia Office

1515 Market Street, Suite 1300,

Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Voice/TDD: (215) 557-7112; Toll Free: (888) 745-2357

Harrisburg area CAP Office :

207 House Ave, Suite 107-A

Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice/TDD: (717) 731-1077; Toll Free: (800) 323-6060 x 140

www.equalemployment.org

Email Address: info@equalemployment.org

LeeLippi@aol.com

Philadelphia Legal Assistance

42 South 15th Street, Suite 500

Philadelphia, PA. 19102

(215) 981-3800

www.philalegal.org

**Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA) is dedicated to providing high quality, creative legal services, advice and referrals for eligible low income people. We are committed to educating and empowering our clients and working collectively with other advocates to achieve these goals. PLA serves a culturally and linguistically diverse low-income constituency in Philadelphia. Clients are eligible if their income falls at or below 125 % of the national poverty level, or between 125% - 200% if certain criteria are met.*

Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia

The United Way Building

1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, 2nd Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-627-7100

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<http://www.pilcop.org/>

**The Law Center uses high-impact legal strategies to improve the well-being and life prospects of the Philadelphia region's most vulnerable populations by assuring that they have access to the resources and services that all of us need to lead our lives.*

Senior Law Center

100 South Broad Street, Suite 1810

Philadelphia, PA 19110

215-988-1244 (1242)

www.seniorlawcenter.org

**Helps protect legal rights of senior citizens; serves low income seniors; wide range of legal problems for seniors 60 and over. Older Pennsylvanians served each year, include victims of elder abuse and financial exploitation, elders facing housing crises and homelessness, and grandparents raising grandchildren.*

Temple Legal Aid

1719 North Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19140

215-204-1800

**Provides free legal services for people with low-income, cancer, HIV, physical disabilities. Do not handle criminal cases.*

St. Agatha-St. James Church

38th and Chestnut Streets

Philadelphia, PA 19104

215-386-9732

** Wednesday Evenings, 6PM - Includes medical, dental and legal clinics; meals on property*

University of Pennsylvania: The Penn Legal Assistance Office

3501 Sansom St

Philadelphia, PA 19130

215-898-8427

www.law.upenn.edu/clinic

**Provides a variety of legal civil services (no criminal services) for low-income people*

Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program

2101 L Street NW, Suite 420

Washington, DC 20037

202 628-8164

888 838-7727 (toll free)

<http://www.vetsprobono.org>.

**The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program provides free attorneys to veterans and their qualifying family members who have an appeal pending at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court Mission: "Every veteran or survivor who has taken an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims, who has a legally credible claim, and who wishes to be represented by counsel, shall have competent representation.")*

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Veterans Law Clinic, Widener School of Law

Widener University School of Law

4601 Concord Pike

Wilmington, DE 19803

302-477-2090; 302-477-2116; 717-541-3800

<http://law.widener.edu/vetclinic/index.shtml>

The **Veterans Law Clinic offers free legal aid to veterans living at 150% of poverty level who have been denied benefits by the Regional Office and wish to take an appeal to the BVA. If you live in Delaware or Pennsylvania, and your Regional Office has denied your claim, and you do not know where to turn, call the Veterans Law Clinic Program at 302-477-2090, or for an appointment.*

Women Against Abuse

100 South Broad Street, Suite 1341

Philadelphia, PA 19110

215.386.1280

Philadelphia HOTLINE: 866-723-3014

<http://womenagainstabuse.org/>

**Provides comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence in Philadelphia. Our services include emergency shelter, transitional housing, legal services, behavioral healthcare, hotline counseling, community education and advocacy. National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233*

Women Against Legal Abuse Legal Unit

100 South Broad Street, Suite 1341

Philadelphia, PA 19110

215-686-7082

866-723-3014 for emergency shelter

<http://www.womenagainstabuse.org/index.php/our-services/legal/>

**The Legal Center offers free legal advocacy and representation for both males and females dealing with relationship violence-related legal matters.*

Women Organized Against Rape

One Penn Center

1617 John F Kennedy Blvd., Suite 1100

Philadelphia, PA 19103

24 hour hotline: 215-985-3333

www.woar.org

**Philadelphia's only rape crisis center. Counseling, education, legal advocacy, support groups and medical accompaniment to the emergency room.*

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Women's Law Project

125 South 9th Street, Suite 300

Philadelphia, PA 19107

215-928-9801

www.womenslawproject.org

**The Mission of the Women's Law Project is to create a more just and equitable society by advancing the rights and status of all women throughout their lives. To this end, we engage in high-impact litigation, advocacy, and education.*

*Sources: Legal/Advocacy information verified MSW intern, Anna Gerrity; 12/2012